

Proposed UN programme plan and budget for 2021



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Mr Chair,

Thank you to the Secretary-General for joining us today to introduce his proposed programme budget for 2021. I would also like to thank the ACABQ and the Committee for Programme and Coordination for their work reviewing it and for providing their recommendations to the Fifth Committee ahead of its consideration of the proposed budget.

As the United Nations celebrates its 75th anniversary, the demands and expectations of the Organisation to tackle the diverse and significant international challenges are greater than ever. Member States have a duty to the United Nations and the people it serves to ensure that the Organisation has the right level of resource needed to carry out all the mandates given to it by us, in particular in support of the 2030 Agenda.

We will evaluate the budget proposals carefully to ensure that programmes will use resources efficiently and effectively; are using innovation, data and continuous improvement to best effect; and have a clear focus on delivering actual results.

Last year the General Assembly adopted the first annual programme budget since the 1970s, implementing General Assembly resolution 72/266. The United Kingdom remains a firm supporter of the Secretary-General's reform agenda. The move to an annual budget is an important element of these reforms. It brings the United Nations' plans, budgets and performance reports closer to the point of implementation and means it can be more agile and responsive to the challenges it faces. We look forward to hearing how this is helping the United Nations adapt to and better deliver mandates; address emerging challenges - like COVID19; and ensure a greater focus and accountability for actual results.

The world has changed significantly over the past six months. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on all of us, including how we operate. Whilst recognising that there remain significant unknowns about what COVID 19 means for the United Nations' work, we would welcome a latest assessment of implications for the planned work in 2021 during our consideration of the programme budget.

We share the Secretary-General's concerns about the liquidity situation the United Nations continues to face. We commend the Controller and the rest of the Organisation for prioritising how available resources are used in an effort to mitigate the impact on mandate delivery. Such a situation is far from satisfactory and not sustainable. We reiterate our call for Member States to pay their assessed contributions in full and in good time. We also encourage the Secretary-General to identify new and innovative ways to help alleviate these liquidity challenges for the regular budget, and hope that the UN – like all of us – will take lessons from the pandemic into the way we operate in future.

Mr Chair,

Finally, I would like to assure you of my delegation's commitment to work constructively with all delegations to reach a good and timely outcome on the 2021 budget.

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